



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## WHY THE ARMY CANTEEN SHOULD NOT BE RESTORED.

BY MRS. LILLIAN M. N. STEVENS, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL  
WOMAN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION.

---

I HAVE read with deep interest the article in the January number of the REVIEW, "Why the Army Canteen Should be Restored." Representing a great army of temperance workers in this country, known as the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, I am grateful for the privilege accorded me of replying in brief to the statements contained in that article.

The writer of the article is correct in thinking that the proposition to restore the Canteen will "meet with severe opposition," but he is wrong when he states that the proposition is destined to meet with opposition "through ignorance." It may be well for a moment to consider who the opponents of the Canteen have been and now are, in order to see if they can rightfully be classed as ignorant.

The attitude of the churches throughout the country is well known. The following declaration of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, made in 1900, plainly defines the views of that body on the Canteen question :

"We deeply regret that, after the enactment of a law prohibiting the sale of intoxicating beverages at army posts and in forts, camps, and reservations used for military purposes, a law plainly intended to effectuate this result and so understood by its friends and foes in and out of Congress and by the Chief Magistrate who signed it, by a construction which seems to us forced and unnatural placed upon the law by the Attorney-General, its plain intent was defeated, and the Government of the United States, amid the exultation of all sympathizers with the liquor traffic, resumed the practice of selling intoxicating beverages to its soldiers. Aroused and indignant at the aggressiveness of the liquor power, at the inexcusable miscarriage of the anti-Canteen law, and at the new perils in which the nation is involved in its new possessions, the Church

will summon and pledge all her ministers and people to a more determined struggle against this enormous evil and urge each to contribute thereto according to his judgment, his testimony, his example, and his ballot."

The stand there taken against the Canteen has been upheld ever since by the leading papers and people of that denomination.

No less pronounced is the attitude of nearly all the other denominations.

"The Standard," a leading Baptist paper published in Chicago, about a year after the passage of the present anti-Canteen law, said:

"A systematic attempt has already been made to magnify the drunkenness and disorder of the army posts since the Canteens were abolished. The daily newspapers print frequent accounts of drunken riots at various army posts, with the comment that this is what might have been expected now the soldiers are deprived of the Canteen beer. There is no doubt, of course, that soldiers still get drunk on whiskey obtained at saloons near the posts. This they have done from time immemorial, and the sale of beer in the post exchanges does not prevent a flourishing trade at the outside saloons. The argument offered in favor of the beer Canteen, that it prevented the soldiers from getting whiskey, never had the support of facts."

The temperance organizations of the country and young people's societies, like the Christian Endeavor, are against the Canteen, and like the church they do not represent the *ignorant* people. On the contrary, many of those who belong to and work in the temperance organizations are specialists on matters relating to the use of alcoholics, spending their entire time in study and investigation concerning the nature and effects of alcoholic liquor and the best methods of restricting its sale. Many such men may be found in the Anti-Saloon League, a society which numbers among its members and officers many who stand high in professional life, and who study this question in a non-partisan and non-sectarian way. This Society, at its annual convention assembled in Washington a few weeks ago, resolved to do its utmost to defeat any attempt to repeal the anti-Canteen law, and to "continue agitation until the public and those who control the army understand that liquor-selling in the army Canteen is a question of national morality, and not alone one of military regulation."

I might also quote expressions to the same effect from leading men in the Prohibition Party and the National Temperance Society, who certainly are well informed concerning the Canteen

and the results of its abolishment; likewise from representatives of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, whose members have been studying and discussing the question of liquor-selling in the army for more than twenty years. We all feel that we have conclusive proof that the effect of the anti-Canteen law is good for the soldier, and hence good for the country.

The interest of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union in abolishing the Canteen system is of long standing. In 1883, Miss Frances E. Willard recommended in her annual address before the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union, of which she was President, the appointment of a Superintendent of Gospel Work among soldiers and sailors. It came about in this way: Miss Willard was visiting in a Southern home, when she met a beautiful young woman who was closely related to an army officer. Miss Willard talked with her about the many departments of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, and the young lady with great earnestness said: "I wish you would add one more department for the soldiers, for my brother is a soldier." Miss Willard said: "It seems like poetic justice that a pure and gentle girl, tenderly interested to protect her brother from the bad habits so often induced by army life, should have been the procuring cause of this beneficent department of our work."

The last report of the Surgeon-General plainly indicates that there has been a decrease of disease in the army since the Canteen was abolished. In 1900, prior to its abolishment, the number admitted to the hospitals in the whole army, compared with the number admitted in 1902, showed a decrease of 25 per cent. for the latter year; and insanity has decreased in somewhat greater proportion than have other diseases. The courts-martial report shows that, since the anti-Canteen law was passed, there has been a decrease of about forty per one thousand men.

General Miles has said:

"The prediction that the change would prevent enlistments and increase desertions has not been fulfilled. Since the law was approved, namely, on February 2, 1901, the recruiting stations have been thronged with men seeking enlistment for the service, 25,944 men having enlisted since that date, and the percentage of desertions is now far less than in former years. Desertions most usually occur during the first six months of enlistment, and a much larger percentage of enlistments has been made during the past six months than heretofore. In many cases, the men that have deserted belong to a class whose presence in the service

was not desirable under any conditions, but whose real character was not known at the time of enlistment."

Major Seaman thinks the name Canteen as used is "illogical and unrighteous." In General Orders 69, of the War Department, we find the description of a Post Exchange with a Canteen provision to be:

"(a) A well-stocked general store in which such goods are kept as are usually required at military posts, and as extensive in number and variety as conditions will justify; (b) a well-kept lunch counter supplied with as great a variety of viands as circumstances permit, such as tea, coffee, cocoa, non-alcoholic drinks, soup, fish, cooked and canned meats, sandwiches, pastries, etc.; (c) a Canteen at which, under the conditions hereinafter set forth, beer and light wines, by the drink, and tobacco, may be sold; (d) reading and recreation rooms, etc."

The "Canteen" has certainly been an unrighteous place. The Secretary of the National Reform Bureau thus describes one of them:

"I saw the Canteen in operation on a pay-day, not in an extemporized volunteer camp in time of war, but in a New England fort, at Newport, R. I., in time of peace—between the Cuban and Philippine war—in charge of regular army soldiers, though volunteers also patronized it. The bar was almost 'the whole thing.' The eating tables were in the kitchen, and the cigar stand was in a small corner. Behind the bar stood a soldier and a professional bar-tender, both drenched in perspiration and beer, dealing out drinks as fast as they could to the soldiers, who stood four deep in front howling for it, in all stages of intoxication, while a 'skin game' of gambling, on the floor at one end of the bar, was making away with all the money that had not been spent, then or in advance, for beer in the case of many a soldier. Instead of the Canteen keeping the soldiers from outside saloons, they went from that preparatory course in beer to deeper drinking in the city saloons, which they crowded, where they had more gambling; and from this second course, many went on to a third that I need not mention. Talk about Canteens keeping men from deserting! Fully half of the regiment deserted that pay-day night as a part of the spree. Canteens are not all alike, any more than outside saloons; but I have pictures and testimony to prove *that* one fairly representative."

General A. S. Daggett has aptly said:

"The Canteen stands as a constant invitation to the total abstainer to drink, as a temptation to the moderate drinker to drink more, and as a convenience to the drunkard to load up on beer when he has not the means to obtain anything stronger."

Seventy-five per cent. of the army consists of young men, and a great many of them come from country homes. Many had never drunk, and some had never seen a saloon; but, removed from home influences, with the temptation of the legalized sale of alcoholics, such as the Canteen afforded, in their midst, it is not strange that many of them yielded, and that some of them, if they lived to return to their homes, were spoken of as those who were "ruined by army life."

According to the views of the members of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, those people who are well informed, who fully understand the waste and misery caused by alcoholic drinks and who are true patriots, must rejoice that "the sale or dealing in beer, wine, or any intoxicating liquors by any person in any Post Exchange or Canteen or army transport, or upon any premises used for military purposes by the United States, is prohibited." And, by the same token, such people will work for the retention and enforcement of this beneficent law.

I forbear to give in detail the opinions of the Generals who have approved of the anti-Canteen measure, but I may mention the names of some of them: Generals Wheeler, Howard, Ludlow, Henry, Boynton, Willcox, Stanley, Rochester, Harris, Carr, Carlin, Graham, Castleman, Bliss, Lee; I have already referred to the position of Generals Miles and Daggett. It may not be out of place to give the opinion of some of the Post Chaplains. Chaplain Bateman, who is stationed at Vancouver Barracks, several months after the passage of the anti-Canteen law said:

"The Mayor of Vancouver, Mr. Johnson, informs me that the town has never been so quiet as it is now, nor disorderly conduct on the part of the soldiers so infrequent. I do not say that this is the result of the abolishment of the Canteen, but can only point to it as an undisputed fact."

Chaplain Nave has said:

"The Government Canteen doctrine is dangerous to inculcate into the minds of hundreds of thousands of young men destined to return to citizenship, and be fathers of children of the future republic. It will result in undoing the best work of these days. The business success of the Canteen gained the adherence of many who did not seriously consider their moral influence."

At Fort Wadsworth previous to the passing of the anti-Canteen law there were 21 prisoners in the guard-house, while under

the new law the next pay-day the number was reduced to 9, which is said to be the lowest in years.

The claim that cheap saloons and disreputable resorts have multiplied near by the forts or posts is, to a great extent, erroneous. It has been reliably stated that nothing of this kind has occurred in the neighborhood of Fort Wadsworth or near Fort Hamilton in Brooklyn, whereas an old and rather notorious place near the latter fort was closed for lack of business a few months after the enactment of the anti-Canteen law.

I am in receipt of many letters from those who represent both sides of the controversy. I have a letter from a soldier in which he says that, while the Canteen existed, many of those who became intoxicated were shielded, but that now, when the men go to a saloon and return to their post intoxicated, they are speedily tried and placed in the guard-house with a fine; and he adds: "We believe this is done to get the public interested and have a bill passed to open the Canteen again."

Colonel Myrick, Commandant at Fort Preble, Maine, in an interview which he granted us in regard to the effects of the abolishment of the Canteen, said:

"I think there was a disposition on the part of captains, when the Canteen was in vogue, to rather overlook cases where men were intoxicated. They had a sort of feeling that it wasn't quite just to put the temptation before the men and then punish them for drinking; now it is a matter of going outside the post, and the army officers do not hesitate to punish the men for the same indulgence, in the same way they hesitated when the beer was sold to them legally in the Canteen."

There is no Canteen in the navy. The order against the sale of beer or any other kind of liquor in the navy, Secretary Long has said, was brought about by "the solicitation of naval officers themselves, who were actuated by a sense of duty to the service."

Secretary Long added:

"The sale of beer on shipboard was regarded by many of them as an evil, and they sought to abate it. . . . The matter was first suggested to the Department by Captain Folger, of the cruiser 'New Orleans.' After his return from the war, he wrote a letter in which he fully explained the evils which, in his judgment, resulted from permitting the sale of liquor on shipboard.

"This letter I referred to a number of other captains. Among them were Captains Barker, Higginson, Crowninshield, and Bradford. After a careful consideration of the matter they reported; the majority

of them favoring the absolute prohibition of beer and liquor on board. Then it was that the order was issued. The Department felt that its duty to the boys and men in the service required such an order."

We wish to emphasize the opinion of General Joseph Wheeler, that it is "wise for corporations and business men to require total abstinence from their employees. It is also wise for the government to encourage a total abstinence in the army." Surely the United States Government should be able to control its soldiers as well as business corporations control their employees; the discipline of the United States army should be as good and effectual as that of any railroad company or any other corporation, and there is an increasing sentiment to the effect that it is morally wrong for the United States Government to engage in the saloon business.

In regard to the statement in Major Seaman's article referring to the action of the American Medical Association, at its St. Paul meeting, deploring the action of Congress in abolishing the Canteen and recommending its re-establishment, I beg to quote from a letter written by Dr. Didama to the Syracuse "Post Standard." Dr. Didama is one of the leading physicians in New York State, and Dean of the Medical College of Syracuse University. Dr. Didama's statement is of great importance, because it illustrates the manner in which much of the testimony in favor of the Canteen is secured and reported. Dr. Didama writes:

"At a meeting of army surgeons, mostly veterans, held at St. Paul just prior to the assembling of the National Medical Association, a resolution was offered urging Congress to restore the Canteen or 'Post Exchange.' . . . At a general meeting of the American Medical Association, when a majority of the 1500 members were present, the Soldier's Committee appeared and had their resolution presented. A speech in advocacy of the Canteen, commenced by one of the soldiers, a member of the Association, became so violent and abusive that it was suppressed by the clamor of the Convention, and the resolution was not adopted, but referred to a legislative committee acting in Washington.

"The Canteen advocates, determined to secure a decision in their favor, rallied their forces the next morning, when not more than fifty members of the Association were present—the rest being at work in the various sections—and secured an affirmative vote, which the President declared unanimous, although he did not put the negative. This vote, secured by a trick, was the heralded unanimous action of the great American Medical Association."

Dr. Didama further says:

"The Canteen is the primary school, the kindergarten, for the saloons.



Many a new recruit tasted alcoholic beverage for the first time in the Canteen. The taste acquired there led him with boon companions to the grog-shop."

Temperance advocates are well pleased with the result thus far of the non-beer exchange, but the eighteen months' trial has been made under the most unfavorable circumstances. The army has been reorganized, and new and inexperienced officers have been put in command of companies. Inspector Breckinridge says in his report: "In the Philippines especially, many companies are without captains, and the companies are in command of new and untried officers."

Again, substitutes for the Canteen have not been established; the half million dollars appropriated by Congress last spring for libraries, amusement buildings, etc., has not been used. A leading General has said, what temperance specialists believe to be true, "that, if all the improvements recommended could be faithfully carried out for five years, the majority of officers would probably favor the plan; continue it for ten years and, I believe, but very few would wish to return to the Canteen system."

LILLIAN M. N. STEVENS.